

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SNM-02 DEAE-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 L-03
INR-07 INRE-00 CIAE-00 SSO-00 /028 W
-----117866 051745Z /46
O 051712Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4037

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EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: SNAR, MX
SUBJECT: NARCOTICS - REPAIR OF DAMAGED AIRCRAFT

REF: (A) STATE 019773; (B) MEXICO 2746

1. DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT, IN ORDER TO OBTAIN EXTENSIVE MILITARY SUPPORT FOR LAST SPRING'S NARCOTICS CAMPAIGN IN NORTHWESTERN ZONE, ATTORNEY GENERAL FLORES REQUESTED USG ASSISTANCE IN PROVIDING NECESSARY TROOP-LIFT. AT DEPARTMENT'S SUGGESTION (REF A), WE EXPLORED POSSIBILITY OF USING NARCOTICS FUNDS TO PLACE MEXICAN AIR FORCE (MAF) HELICOPTERS IN AIRWORTHY CONDITION. THIS APPROACH SUCCEEDED AND, IN AGREEMENT DATED 08 MARCH 1977, WE COMMITTED US\$100,000 FOR THIS PURPOSE.

2. AS REPORTED IN REF (B), ONE OF THE MAF BELL 206-B HELICOPTERS WAS EXTENSIVELY DAMAGED WHILE ON NARCOTICS-RELATED MISSION. AVIATION MAINTENANCE ADVISER ESTIMATES COST OF REPAIR AT APPROXIMATELY US\$140,000 AND STATES THAT REPAIR CANNOT BE PERFORMED IN MEXICO.

3. ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE HAS RAISED QUESTION OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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U.S. WILLINGNESS TO ASSIST WITH REPAIR. EXECUTIVE OFFICER BAEZA STATED THAT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE GALVAN HAS PERSONALLY REQUESTED THAT ATTORNEY GENERAL REPAIR AIRCRAFT. (COMMENT: WE ARE AWARE FROM OTHER SOURCES THAT DEFENSE IS HAVING SEVERE BUDGETARY PROBLEMS AND HAS CURTAILED TRAINING PROGRAMS AND OTHER ROUTINE ACTIVITIES IN ORDER TO CONSERVE FUNDS. MAF IS PARTICULARLY HURTING,

HAVING LOST A BELL 212 IN WEATHER ACCIDENT EARLY LAST WEEK.)

4. BAEZA REALIZES THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR USG TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR REPAIR OF MAF EQUIPMENT AND HAS SUGGESTED THAT WE LIMIT OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE BALANCE OF US\$100,000 FROM THE MARCH 08 AGREEMENT; APPROXIMATELY US\$70,000 REMAINS UNUSED AND UNNEEDED, SINCE MAF HELICOPTERS HAVE BEEN RELEASED FROM NARCOTICS SUPPORT MISSIONS. ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE WOULD FINANCE BALANCE OF REPAIR COST.

5. WE ARE UNCERTAIN WHETHER PRESENT WORDING OF MARCH 08 AGREEMENT ("TO RECONDITION AND MAINTAIN") WOULD INCLUDE REPAIR OF CRASH-DAMAGED AIRCRAFT. WE DO, HOWEVER, SEE A DEFINITE ADVANTAGE TO HELPING THE ATTORNEY GENERAL RETURN THE AIRCRAFT IN GOOD ORDER, SINCE CONTINUED MILITARY SUPPORT WILL BE NEEDED FOR AN EFFECTIVE NARCOTICS PROGRAM. AS REPORTED ELSEWHERE, THE MILITARY AND ATTORNEY GENERAL'S FORCES IN CULIACAN ARE NOW MAKING MEANINGFUL STRIDES IN COORDINATING THEIR EFFORTS AND WE CAN REASONABLY EXPECT A MORE EFFECTIVE PROGRAM AS THIS SPIRIT BECOMES ENTRENCHED.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY REQUESTS EITHER (A) DEPARTMENT CONCURRENCE THAT PRESENT WORDING OF 08 MARCH 1977 AGREEMENT PERMITS USE OF REMAINING FUNDS FOR REPAIR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF MAF HELICOPTER OR (B) DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZATION TO AMEND THAT AGREEMENT BY INSERTING THE WORD "REPAIR" AFTER THE EXISTING WORDS "TO RECONDITION". REQUEST REPLY SOONEST SINCE AGREEMENT SPECIFIES THAT WORK ON MAF HELICOPTERS WILL BE DONE "THROUGH THE BELL HELICOPTER COMPANY CONTRACT" WHICH EXPIRES AUGUST 31. REPAIR CONTRACT MUST BE SIGNED BY THAT DATE. LUCEY

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Event:
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